

We Claim:

1. An absorbent device for insertion into a vaginal cavity, the absorbent device comprising:

a) an absorbent body; and

b) an indicator structure arranged and configured within the

absorbent body, the indicator structure comprising a resilient member having a first arm having a rough surface and a second arm, the first and second arms being maintained in a strained configuration by a restraint;

wherein the restraint weakens upon exposure to moisture and the resilient member is capable of articulating to a relaxed configuration upon the weakening of the restraint in a movement in which the rough surface of the first arm traverses the second arm to generate vibration discernible to the user.

2. The absorbent device of claim 1 wherein the absorbent body comprises absorbent material.

3. The absorbent device of claim 2 wherein the absorbent material is formed of fibers, foams, or combinations thereof.

4. The absorbent device of claim 1 wherein the restraint maintains the resilient member in a stretched configuration.

5. The absorbent device of claim 1 wherein the restraint maintains the resilient member in a bent configuration.

5 6. The absorbent device of claim 1 wherein the restraint maintains the resilient member in a twisted configuration.

7. The absorbent device of claim 1 wherein the first arm is maintained across the second arm.

10 8. The absorbent device of claim 1 wherein the first arm is maintained in a spaced relationship from the second arm.

15 9. The absorbent device of claim 1 wherein the second arm has a rough surface.

10. The absorbent device of claim 1 wherein the resilient member is formed of plastics, metals, and combinations thereof.

20 11. The absorbent device of claim 1 wherein the restraint comprises a water soluble material.

12. The absorbent device of claim 11 wherein the restraint comprises a material selected from the group consisting of gelatins, water soluble adhesives, cellulose derivatives including HPMC (hydroxypropyl methyl cellulose) and ethyl cellulose, polyvinyl alcohol, polyether urethane, polyethylene oxide, polyacrylamide and copolymers thereof, polyacrylic acid and combinations thereof.

13. An indicator device comprising a resilient member having a first arm having a rough surface and a second arm, the first and second arms being maintained in a strained configuration by a restraint wherein the restraint weakens upon exposure to moisture and the resilient member is capable of articulating to a relaxed configuration upon the weakening of the restraint in a movement in which the rough surface of the first arm traverses the second arm to generate vibration.

14. A method of absorbing aqueous vaginal fluids comprising the steps of:

a) inserting an absorbent device into a vaginal cavity, the absorbent device comprising an absorbent body and an indicator structure arranged and configured within the absorbent body, the indicator structure comprising a resilient member having a first arm having a rough surface and a second arm, the first and second arms being maintained in a strained configuration by a restraint, wherein the restraint weakens upon exposure to moisture and the

resilient member is capable of articulating to a relaxed configuration upon the weakening of the restraint in a movement in which the rough surface of the first arm traverses the second arm to generate vibration discernible within the vaginal cavity;

b) allowing the absorbent device to absorb sufficient aqueous vaginal fluids to weaken the restraint and to permit the resilient member to revert to the relaxed configuration;

c) detecting the vibrations generated by the first arm traversing the second arm; and

d) removing the absorbent device from the vaginal cavity.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising the step of inserting a second absorbent device into the vaginal cavity after the step of removing the absorbent device from the vaginal cavity.

16. A method of making an absorbent device comprising the steps of:

a) manipulating a resilient member having a first arm having a rough surface and a second arm into a strained configuration;

b) applying a restraint to maintain the resilient member in the strained configuration, forming an indicator structure, the restraint being capable of weakening upon exposure to moisture and the resilient member is

capable of articulating to a relaxed configuration upon the weakening of the restraint in a movement in which the rough surface of the first arm traverses the second arm to generate vibration discernible to a user; and

c) forming an absorbent body containing the indicator structure.

5

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the step of forming the absorbent body comprises forming the absorbent body around the indicator structure.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein the step of forming the absorbent body comprises forming the absorbent body and inserting the indicator structure into the absorbent body.

0994154.1
T09T1660